

against the inner surface of the sleeve; hinges and fasteners releasibly hooked between said sleeve members to integrally connect said sleeve members to each other through said abutting joint surfaces arranged opposite to each other; said end plates each being formed of rubber plastic material with a slit in a manner to extend from said cable guide hole to a portion of said end plate in proximity to an outer periphery of said end plate so as to permit a wall of said end plate to open by cutting along said slit; said cable guide hole being provided thereon with a thin-wall cap capable of being removed by cutting and said slit being detachably fitted therein with a rigidity holding member; and a gasket including an adhesive interposed between said outer periphery of said end plate and an inner surface of said sleeve so as to cover an outer end of said slit, said gasket arranged on the outer periphery surface of the end plate by adhesion while being conformed to the outer periphery of the end plate and the plurality of peak and valley shaped grooves of the sealing member.

REMARKS

This Continued Prosecution Application is in response to the final Official Action mailed October 27, 1999 in the above-identified application. A three month extension is enclosed herewith for resetting the deadline for submitting the within Continued Prosecution Application from January 27, 2000 to and including April 27, 2000. In view of the above amendments and within remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-33 in the application were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki, et al., Japanese Patent No. 8242526 in view of Nimiya, et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,933,512. The Examiner states that Sasaki, et al. discloses all of Applicants' claimed features except for a gasket including an adhesive between the end plates and the

sleeve. To this end, the Examiner refers to Nimiya, et al. as showing a gasket 60 including an adhesive between the end plates 40 and the sleeve 20. In the Examiner's opinion, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to modify the closure of Sasaki, et al. by incorporating a gasket including an adhesive between the end plates and sleeves, as taught by Nimiya, et al. in order to increase the sealing capabilities between the plates and the sleeves, and to provide a secondary sealing means between the plates and the sleeves in case the inherent sealing capabilities of the plate fail.

Turning to independent claim 1 as amended, such claim has been amended wherein the end plates are provided with a sealing member (see element 26 in Fig. 9) on their outer periphery surface in the form of a plurality of peak and valley shaped grooves, and the adhesive gasket is arranged on the outer periphery surface by adhesion while conforming to the outer periphery of the end plate and the plurality of peaks and valley shaped grooves of the sealing member. This feature further distinguishes Applicants' claimed invention over the combination of Sasaki, et al. and Nimiya, et al. Nimiya, et al. merely discloses the use of an elastic tape 60 which is wound around the outer smooth recess portion 42B of the end plate as best shown in Fig. 5. There is no suggestion in Nimiya, et al. of arranging the elastic tape as claimed with respect to Applicants' adhesive gasket so as to be conformed to the outer periphery of the end plate and the plurality of peaks and valley shaped grooves of the sealing member.

In this regard, the end plate of Sasaki, et al. is made of a rubber elastic material and is provided on its outer periphery with a plurality of circumferential projections 26 which serve as an air-tight seal between the inner periphery of the sleeve and the outer periphery of the end plate.

Accordingly, Sasaki, et al. teaches that the circumferential projections 26, without more, is sufficient for providing an air-tight seal and that other sealing mechanisms are not warranted or necessary. Thus, there is no need for any modification of Sasaki, et al. to provide any additional sealing means, such as the gasket suggested by the Examiner as purportedly disclosed in Nimiya, et al.

Nimiya, et al. teaches that its end plates 40 are made of a rigid material such as plastic. By virtue of the end plates being made of rigid plastic material, it is necessary for Nimiya, et al. to use an elastic tape 60. As clearly shown in Fig. 5, the elastic tape is not provided over the entire circumferential surface of the end plate 40, but only within the smooth recessed portions 42B, thereby leaving exposed flange portions 42A. From the foregoing, it is clear that the sealing principles of Sasaki, et al. and Nimiya, et al. are contrary to one another. On the one hand, Sasaki, et al. makes use of the inherent properties of its end plate being made from rubber elastic material and the provisions of circumferential projections to form an air-tight seal. On the other hand, Nimiya, et al. employs a separate elastic material formed within recessed portions 42B of its end plate which is made of a rigid material necessitating the use of the elastic material to create a seal. Sasaki, et al. provides no suggestion that any additional sealing element, such as Nimiya et al.'s elastic tape is required to provide an air-tight seal.

Regarding claim 3, referring to Fig. 6 or Fig. 20(b) of Sasaki, et al., there is no disclosure of a third rigidity holding member which is detachably fitted in the cable guide hole as claimed, see elements 25 and 20, respectively, in Applicants' Fig. 7.

Regarding claims 4, 11-21, 32 (independent) and 33, though Sasaki, et al. discloses a cable clamp including a clamp

body having curved holding members 17, the recessed portions of the clamp body and curved holding members are each formed on an inner surface thereof with a plurality of projections for biting into a sheath of a cable, as shown in Fig. 17. Sasaki, et al., therefore, does not disclose Applicants' claimed holding spacers 33 (see Fig. 14), as specifically claimed in these claims.

Regarding claim 7, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose a holder 31 provided on the end plate 3 and formed with a recess 30, and a projection 40 of the cable clamp 4 adapted to fit in the recess 30, as claimed in this claim, see Applicants' Figs. 8 and 12.

Regarding claims 9 and 10, each of the screws 19 of Sasaki, et al. is threaded into the clamp body 16, and thus Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 14, a pivotal element 19, into which the screw 19 is inserted and which is pivotally supported on the clamp body 16, as claimed in claims 9 and 10.

Regarding claim 22, Sasaki, et al. discloses a pair of hinge mechanisms each constituted by a hinge hole 28 and a hinge rod 27 and a plurality of buckles 30. However, the hinge mechanisms 27, 28 and buckles 30 are different from the hinges 60 and fasteners 70, as claimed in claim 22.

Regarding claims 23-25, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Figs. 35A and 36, a recess 76 between the outer edges of the abutting joint surfaces of the sleeve members 1, 2 and a retaining member 77 provided on the ring of the fastener 70 or hinge 60, as claimed in these claims.

Regarding claim 26, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 36, a stopper 64 for holding the first ring 61 of the hinge 60 at a predetermined angle, as claimed in this claim.

Regarding claim 27, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose that the opposite ends of the recess 6 for the gasket 7 are each reduced in width, as claimed in this claim.

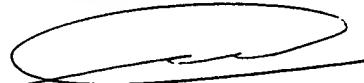
Regarding claim 28, Sasaki, et al. does not disclose, see Applicants' Fig. 4, barriers 65 provided on both side edges of the sleeve members 1, 2, as claimed in this claim.

Accordingly, the aforementioned features as set forth in the above specified claims are deemed to be both novel and unobvious over Sasaki, et al. either alone or in combination with Nimiya, et al. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

As all claims pending in the application possess the requisite novelty and unobviousness over the prior art of record, Notice of Allowance is now in order. If, for any reason, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken at this time, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000, so as to overcome any additional issues that may need resolution. If there are any fees to be incurred in connection with this response, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

Respectfully submitted,

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